

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A container having a body portion with a closed bottom, a neck
 5 portion above said body portion, said neck portion tapering inwardly as it
 extends away from said body portion, and a closure-receiving finish portion,
 said neck portion being positioned between said body portion and said neck
 portion, said container being adapted to hold a liquid, being formed in a single
 piece by molding from a thermoplastic material and having a body portion
 10 with a lateral extent of at least 4 in., said container further having no opening
 extending laterally therethrough and having a gripping feature formed by a
 spaced apart pair of opposed gripping panels that extend into said container
 in one of said body portion and said neck portion, the space between said
 gripping panel being no more than 2-1/2 in.

15 2. A container according to claim 1 wherein:
 said body portion of said container has a cross-sectional
configuration that is generally that of an oval with a larger, part-circular end
and a smaller, part-circular opposed end; and
 20 said gripping panels extend into said container in said body
 portion from said opposed end.

3. A container according to claim 2 wherein:
 said gripping panels extend into said body portion of said
 25 container only partly to a longitudinal centerline of said container.

4. A container according to claim 3 wherein:
 said body portion has a minor lateral extent of at least 4 in., and
 a major lateral extent of at least 5 in., the major lateral extent extending
 30 perpendicularly to said minor lateral extent.

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5. A container according to claim 4 where in:
said container has an internal capacity of at least 64 oz.

6. A container according to claim 5 wherein:
each of said gripping panels is concave in cross-section.

7. A container according to claim 6 wherein a ratio of spacing
between opposed gripping panels, as measured between depths of said
gripping panels, to major lateral extent of said container does not exceed
0.55.

8. A container according to claim 7 wherein said ratio is at least
0.35.

9. A container according to claim 8 wherein said ratio is
approximately 0.45.

10. A container according to claim 1 wherein:
said body portion is generally circular in cross-section, and said
gripping panels extend into said container in said neck portion.

11. A container according to claim 10, wherein:
said body portion has a diameter of at least 4-1/4 in.

12. A container according to claim 11, wherein:
said container has an internal capacity of at least 64 oz.

13. A container according to claim 12 wherein:
each of said gripping panels is concave in cross-section.

14. A container according to claim 13 wherein:

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a ratio of spacing between opposed gripping panels, as measured between depths of said gripping panels, to major lateral extent of said container does not exceed 0.55.

5 15. A container according to claim 14 wherein said ratio is at least 0.35.

16. A container according to claim 15 wherein said ratio is approximately 0.41.

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17. A container according to claim 1, wherein:
said thermoplastic material comprises at least an innermost layer of PET.

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18. A container according to claim 17, wherein:
said container is adapted for packaging a still beverage that is introduced, while hot, into the container and is sealed in the container by applying a closure to the finish portion of the container while the beverage is still hot, said body portion having a circumferentially spaced apart plurality of inwardly projecting panels for partial collapsing to accommodate shrinkage of the packaged beverage as it cools.

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